

Summary of Research

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey 2001

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Responsive Management Unit

Research Summary No.7

In 2001, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) undertook a customer satisfaction survey to evaluate how well FWP is meeting the expectations of its customers and constituents. Information collected will aid decisions about how to improve and/or redirect the agency's strategic and operational focus.

Four perspectives were developed to measure FWP's performance. This will ensure that decisions related to how the agency is doing is not based on a single criteria or measure. The four perspectives are:

- 1) *Citizen/Constituent* – How does public see FWP?
- 2) *Internal* – What must we excel at?
- 3) *Innovation* – How can we continue to improve?
- 4) *Financial* – What is critical to our long-term viability?

A strategic objective for each of the four perspectives was developed and a list of performance indicators identified to measure how well we are meeting our stated objectives. This survey focused on measuring public attitudes towards FWP from the customer and financial perspectives. The specific performance indicators that were measured for these two perspectives are:

Citizen/Constituent Perspective – To create relationships with our diverse public such that FWP is viewed as responsive, fair, honest, and professional.

Performance Indicators:

- ❖ Responsiveness (willingness to listen, timeliness of replies)
- ❖ Honesty and fairness in treatment of all interests

Financial Perspective – To responsively manage and expand FWP's funding; to balance the values and interest of user fees and the best interest of the resources we manage and protect.

Performance Indicator:

- ❖ Appropriate use of user fees

This research summary highlights the key findings of the 2001 study. In addition to this research summary, a more detailed report of the study is available from FWP (Brooks, Lewis, and King, 2001)

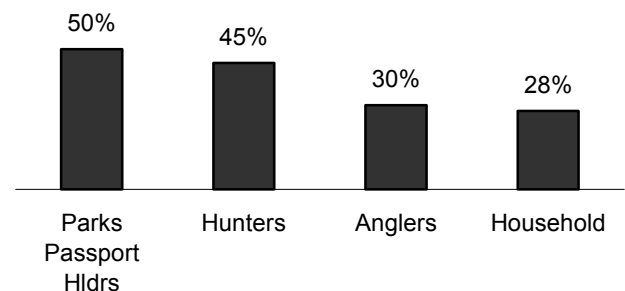


FWP CUSTOMERS SHARED THEIR VIEWS

Four different randomly selected samples of the public were identified for study. The survey was

mailed to 900 Montana residential households, 500 resident and 100 non-resident angling and hunting license holders, respectively, from the year 2000, and 500 resident and 100 non-resident parks passport holders from the year 2000. Survey response rates varied depending on the sample of the public in question, (Figure 1). Most of the respondents were males, 42-56 years old, and 74% had some college/trade school or higher, education.

Figure 1. Response Rate



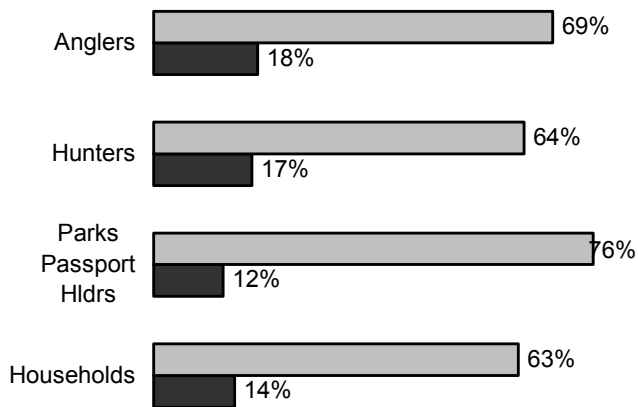


The percentages in gray, indicate the percent of respondents who “Agreed” or Strongly Agreed” and in black, those who “Disagreed” or Disagreed Strongly” to the statement:

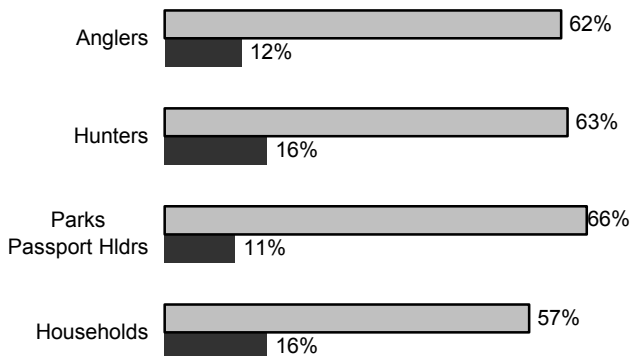
those who “Disagreed” or Disagreed Strongly” to the statement:

OVERALL, RESPONDENTS ARE SATISFIED WITH FWP

Overall, I am satisfied with the programs and services provided by FWP.

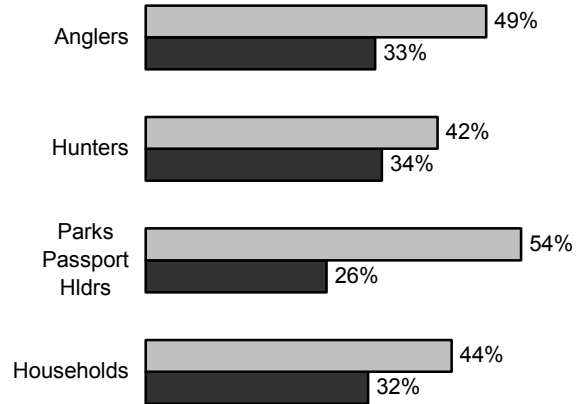


I think FWP provides important services to the public in a timely manner.

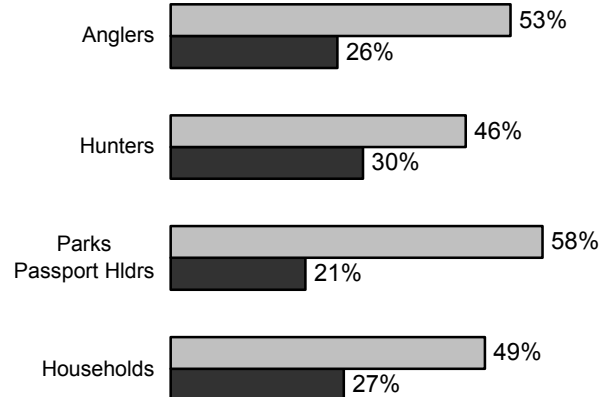


SOME AREAS WHERE IMPROVEMENT IS NEEDED

I think FWP listens to all points of view offered by the public.



I believe FWP is open and honest when dealing with the public.



I think FWP uses the dollars and fees they collect in an appropriate manner.

YES **70%**

Of the respondents who stated they were knowledgeable about FWP’s user fees, most said we used their money in an appropriate manner.



SUMMARY/NEXT STEPS

Four segments of the public (residential households in Montana, angling license holders, hunting license holders, and parks passport holders) were asked their opinions as to whether or not they believe MFWP is responsive, fair, honest, and professional, and whether or not they believe the agency uses license and user fee dollars in an appropriate manner. Depending on the questions asked, we found mixed results. While there are many areas in which MFWP is excelling, results of the study suggest there are some areas in which the agency has room for improvement.

Overall, a majority of respondents indicated they believe the agency is responsive and makes appropriate use of license and user fee dollars. In fact, a strong majority of respondents are satisfied with the programs and services offered by MFWP. On a less positive note, about 30% don't think the agency is open and honest in the treatment of all interests. In particular, a disturbing number of respondents believe the agency doesn't adequately involve the public, fails to listen to all points of view offered by the public, and doesn't care about what the public wants. Of note, Montana residents were more critical of the agency as a whole than were nonresidents. These results were further echoed in concerns identified following a content analysis of the open-ended comments offered by respondents that were deemed germane to the performance indicators addressed in this study.

Discussions by the Management Team and other interested employees regarding the Customer Satisfaction Survey and potential actions the agency might take to improve the public's experience when they come into contact with the Department resulted in the identification of two areas to explore. These two areas are: 1) Agency Public Process/Public Interactions, and 2) Employee/Public Interactions and MFWP Culture.

The Fisheries and Wildlife season/regulation setting and Parks fee rule processes were identified as the best candidates for review and possible improvement since they involve contact with the public from the field level to the Commission. The review will hopefully show us what is working and what is not, as well as what steps the Divisions have already taken to improve these processes.

Providing the public the opportunity to understand these processes as well as when they can provide meaningful input is an important part of this effort. To achieve this goal, we plan to post these processes on the FWP web page. By improving the interactions with the public in these processes, the agency will not only address the public's perception that we don't listen, but we will also address their perception that the agency is overly influenced by special interests.

The 2001 Customer Satisfaction Survey was designed to measure the long-term success of MFWP as a whole from the citizen/constituent perspective. This survey will be replicated every 4-5 years. In addition to this survey, additional surveys of the public should be periodically implemented to measure success of the individual Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Programs found within MFWP. To compliment these public survey efforts, the agency will be conducting periodic surveys of its own employees in order to measure success of the agency from the internal, innovation, and financial perspectives. These and other types of data will provide agency leadership with information needed to make decisions about how to improve and/or redirect the agency's strategic and operational focus over time.



LITERATURE CITED

Brooks, R., Lewis, M.S., and King, Z. 2001 *Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Customer Satisfaction Survey 2001*.
Technical report submitted to the MFWP Management Team
by the Responsive Management Unit of FWP. Helena, MT:
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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